

Political Reorganization and Japan's Security

By Professor Sakanaka Tomohisa

On August 6, 1993 Liberal Democratic Party Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi stepped down and Hosokawa Morihiro was elected prime minister with the support of an eight grouping, anti-LDP force. The 38-year, one-party rule of the LDP, in power since a postwar merger of conservative forces in 1955, collapsed and a period of reorganization commenced for Japan's political world.

During the East-West Cold War, Japan's political world was divided by confrontations over the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and augmentation on the Self-Defense Forces between conservative forces on the one hand and the Socialists, Communists, and other reform parties on the other who believed that Japan was entangled in U.S. strategies. The close of the Cold War and the break-up of the Soviet Union meant that this confrontation's basic components had ceased to exist. Whatever doubts one may have about the Hosokawa government maintaining a cooperative relationship between seven parties and one parliamentary grouping, and its existence, it is safe to say that Japan has now entered a period during which a drastic review of security policies will be needed.

Fragile foundation for security policies

When the Hosokawa government was formed, a memorandum was drafted to confirm that the previous government's diplomatic and defense policies would be continued. But, the makeup of the

policies was unclear. The main question now is how the Self-Defense Forces and the Japan-U.S. security arrangements will be modified, but the new administration's security policy directions are shrouded in fog.

Even though an "eight-party memorandum" exists, the parties disagree on diplomatic and defense policies and their cooperative arrangements could crack as easily as glassware. Broadly sketching the parties' positions on diplomatic and defense policies, the Renewal Party, which split from the LDP under the leadership of Ozawa Ichiro, who wants Japan to actively contribute on the international scene, and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), which advocates the strengthening of the Self-Defense Forces and

Japan-U.S. security arrangements, are farthest to the right. Farthest to the left is the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which calls for cancellation of Japan-U.S. security provisions and reduction or dissolution of the Self-Defense Forces. Komeito, the Japan New Party, and the Harbinger Party fall somewhere between the preceding positions. As far as diplomatic and defense policies are concerned no common policy foundation exists.

The resignation of Renewal Party member Nakanishi Keisuke, who had been installed as chief of the Defense Agency, showed the fragility of the government's foundation less than three months after its formation. Since his appointment, Director-General Nakanishi had aggressively advocated



The first-time dispatch of personnel to regional disputes overseas created considerable controversy. A Ground Self-Defense Force engineering unit undertaking peacekeeping operations in Cambodia.

Photo: Defense Agency

strengthening the role of the Self-Defense Forces in order to make global contributions. At a December 1 study meeting for Shinseito upper house members he suggested that constitutional revisions were required, saying, "It is unwise to cling to a constitution that was created more than half a century ago." Calling this statement a violation of a Cabinet member's duty to uphold the constitution, the LDP created a fuss and jolted the coalition government.

The LDP has from the start advocated revisions to Article 9 of the constitution and, rather than making an issue of the intent of Mr. Nakanishi's statement, the goal was to augment the fissures between the coalition by taking up the issue and dealing a blow to the Hosokawa administration. The government stumbled over this, with the SDP, which advocates defense of the constitution, protesting Mr. Nakanishi's statement and Komeito following suit. Prime Minister Hosokawa was powerless to defend Mr. Nakanishi's statement and saved the situation with the director-general's resignation.

Even so, the advent of the Hosokawa government is not insignificant. Amid changes in the world situation the chance to drastically review Japan's security policies and formulate a national consensus has arisen. Japan's security policies during the Cold War focused on the best means of coping with the Soviet Union's hegemonic threats. Due to this, Japan was divided between forces that emphasized contributions to the peace and security of international society as a "member of the West" and those who opposed this. The new world order means that the primary international and domestic factors that constrained postwar Japan have disappeared.

If the postwar balance of power had continued, would it have been possible to form a government coalition with diplomatic and defense policies as different as oil and water? We can aver that changes in the global situation have weakened the awareness of disparities in diplomatic and defense policies and enabled the appearance of an coalition government. Seen this way it is safe to

say that the Hosokawa government is blessed with an opportunity to formulate a national consensus regarding diplomatic and defense policies.

Holding to the basic line, with a dovish tint

In his first general policy speech on August 23, 1993 Prime Minister Hosokawa emphasized "Japan's position and duties as an international state," stressing cooperation with the U.N. in building a peaceful world order and strengthening cooperative Japan-U.S. relations on the axis of the two countries' security arrangements. As far as can be seen from the keynote address he is following in the LDP's footsteps on security policies and no great shifts can be noted. Even so, as far as the 1994 defense budget is concerned, he is attempting to show a dovish tint by restraining the rate of increase, as in the previous year.

Japan's defense policies are built upon two pillars—the SDF and Japan-U.S. security arrangements. Based upon a policy of maintaining a strictly defensive posture, the SDF defends Japan's territory and the surrounding sea and air space, relying upon the U.S. military for nuclear deterrence and offensive forces.

Japan and the U.S. have both cooperated in creating a defense system to deter invasion. In October 1976 the government set forth the "Defense Program Outline" with the basic objective of increasing defensive strength and this plan delineated three policies that would be followed in promoting the modernization of its defensive capabilities—Japan would rely on the U.S. for nuclear deterrence; Japan would have the capability to deal with small or limited invasions on its own; and if the situation exceeded those limits it would be handled with the cooperation of the U.S. military.

At the beginning of the 1980s, in conjunction with increasing Soviet military threats worldwide, Japan began to build up its defensive strength in order to deal with the Soviet menace. Defense cooperation between Japan and the U.S. progressed and Japan's territorial air and sea defenses, sea-lane defenses, and anti-air and sea-landing capabilities were strengthened. As a result, there were 240,000 Self-Defense Force personnel at the beginning of the 1990s. Although this was small in scale, a modern defense force had been created, with a balance between ground, sea and air capabilities.

The Ground Self-Defense Force con-

Neighboring Countries' Military Strength

Country	Population (A)	Size (B)	Personnel (C)	Reserves (D)	C/A	C/B	D/C	% of GNP
Japan	124,593	378	240	48	2.0	0.6	0.2	0.9
South Korea	44,908	99	633	4,500	14.1	6.4	7.1	3.8
North Korea	23,760	121	1,132	540	47.6	9.4	0.5	26.7
China	1,148,593	9,561	3,300	1,200+	2.9	0.3	0.4	3.2
Taiwan	21,265	36	360	1,654	16.9	10.0	4.6	5.4
U.S.	251,843	9,373	1,914	1,784	7.6	0.2	0.9	5.1
Russia	148,041	17,075	2,720	3,000	18.4	0.2	1.1	N/A

Units: A=1,000; B=1,000 km²; C, D=1,000

Sources: Population, personnel, reserves, % of GNP, defense expenditures—*The Military Balance 1992-1993*, published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies

Notes:

1. C/A = personnel per 1,000 population
2. C/B = personnel per 1,000 km² of territory
3. D/C = reserve members per one military member

sists of 180,000 personnel (a standing force of about 150,000) around a nucleus of 13 divisions and two brigades. Along with the modernization of tanks and armored personnel carriers it has attained high standards in its capabilities to defend against air and sea invasions with the addition of anti-ship missiles and anti-tank helicopters. The Maritime Self-Defense Force has approximately 60 surface vessels, 16 submarines, and around 100 large anti-submarine patrol aircraft (P-3C) and its anti-submarine warfare capabilities are second only to the high standards of the U.S. Further, the Air Self-Defense Force has 28 radar sites stationed across Japan, is equipped with 200 of the latest version of the F-15 jet fighter and Patriot ground-to-air missiles, and has achieved high-level, anti-aircraft defense capabilities. All of the preceding were meant to guard against threats from the USSR.

With worldwide trends toward reduced military strength, the Defense Agency decided to reduce the pace of defense expenditure increases. In the post-Cold War New Mid-Term Defense Build-Up Plan for 1991-95 the annual rate of increase for defense expenditures has been cut to 3.0% from the 5.4% of the previous plan (1986-90) and, moreover, was further revised to 2.1% growth in December 1992. Cuts focus upon outlays for major equipment and the ¥5 trillion that had been appropriated for the five-year period in the original budget was revised to ¥4.44 trillion, or a ¥560 billion cut in appropriations. The procurement of 24 tanks, two naval escorts, and 13 F-15s was postponed due to these expenditure cuts.*

These defense expenditure cuts have the nature of a tentative decision and are not the product of consideration of the end of the Cold War, the break-up of the Soviet Union, and other global upheavals. In his October 31, 1993 Self-Defense Force Day address Prime Minister Hosokawa cast doubts on "whether the Defense Program Outline that was devised nearly 20 years ago

was really applicable to the demands of the age," declaring that "in military reductions as well we must take more initiative than any other nation in leading the way to peace." This probably indicates that the prime minister has in mind a review of the Outline and reductions in defense outlays and SDF personnel.

Three defense policy review issues

As Prime Minister Hosokawa indicated, it goes without saying that the Outline is much in need of a review. However, as the prime minister pointed out in his speech on policy directions, that review should be conducted with an awareness of "Japan's position and duties as an international state." With that in mind I believe that there are three issues.

The first is how cooperation toward global peace and stability will be strengthened. LDP administrations strengthened collaboration on international security as the Cold War was coming to an end. In August 1990 when the Gulf War began with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Japan provided the multilateral force led by the U.S. with upwards of \$13 billion in financial support and dispatched a Maritime Self-Defense Force minesweeping unit to maintain the security of the Persian Gulf. Then, in June 1992 the U.N. Peace Cooperation Bill was passed, opening the way for the SDF to participate in U.N. peacekeeping operations (PKO). In conjunction with U.N. requests a Ground Self-Defense Force engineering unit was dispatched to Cambodia and assisted in road construction.

As an issue for the future, it is predicted that a "U.N. force" will be organized in accordance with Article 43 of the U.N. Charter or that a "peace enforcement unit" under U.N. command will be put together to stop disputes in accordance with U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's proposals for preventive diplomacy policies. The

question that is being asked is how Japan will participate in these U.N. activities directed toward international peace and stability. What response does Prime Minister Hosokawa have?

Second, with regard to review of the Outline, it is necessary to bear the special characteristics of Japan's defense capabilities in mind. The Self-Defense Force maintains 240,000 personnel, but if we compare this to neighboring countries' military power, the number of personnel to population, territorial size, and defense outlays to gross national product (GNP) are all at much lower levels. The reserve force in particular is remarkably small, so we should not lose sight of the fact that the structure differs from other nations (See Table).

Be that as it may, it is forecast that the number of 18 to 27-year-olds who are suited to military service will peak in 1994 at 9 million and rapidly fall below 6.5 million in 2008. If we can foresee a decline in younger age groups then it will be difficult to increase the number of Self-Defense Force personnel and it will likely be necessary to try to continue modernization by taking advantage of technological advances. It may be that the level of defense expenditures will have to be maintained to a sufficient degree in order to do this.

Third, reconsideration of the framework for postwar defense policies is needed. Japan's defense policies are based upon Article 9 of the constitution, which limits defense forces to minimum requirements. This has been used as a basic framework that precludes uses for purposes other than self-defense. Japan's basic defense policy concepts, "a purely defensive posture," "a ban on the overseas dispatch of troops," and the "three non-nuclear principles," among others, were formulated through these policies. These post-war policies reflect the national consensus on regret for World War II and the desire for peace, have taken root in the national consciousness, and are without doubt important indicators for Japan's defense policies.

*The total outlay for the New Mid-Term Defense Build-Up Plan for the five-year period between 1991 and 1995 amounts to ¥22.75 trillion. Using the 1991 yen-dollar rate for conversion purposes, the total amount would be \$168.5 billion, or an annual average of \$33.7 billion.



Photo: Kyodo News Service

U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali visited Japan at the end of 1993 and supported Japan's bid for a permanent Security Council seat while making an exception regarding the dispatch of PKO personnel.

However, we cannot disregard the fact that this defense policy framework has an aspect of restricting Japan's contributions to peace and stability in global society. In a time of increasing interdependence internationally, it is impossible for one country alone to achieve security. From the standpoint of international cooperation, postwar policies may require review.

The long-term view

With the changes in the strategic environment at the end of the Cold War, Japan naturally needs to take a long-term view in an across-the-board reconsideration of defense policies and establish integrated long-term strategies adapted to the new era. It will be necessary to keep the following points in mind when devising these new strategies.

First, with the options for Japan from

the end of the 20th century and into the 21st, amid global interdependence and the globalization of security, the principal point will be how the nation with the world's number two economy will look at its responsibilities. Assuming, for example, that the role Japan serves is limited to financial aspects, Japan's economic policies themselves have a great influence on world peace and stability. Whatever role Japan serves with regard to world peace and stability it probably will not be able to get by avoiding political decisions. Awareness of Japan's role will be more and more important in the future.

Second, the Japan-U.S. relationship will be extremely important from the end of the 20th century and into the 21st. With the end of the Cold War the role of Japan-U.S. security arrangements in response to the Soviet threat will diminish, but the role of Japan-U.S.

security arrangements will be as important as ever as a security system for the world and East Asia. For the foreseeable future no other country appears set to replace the role that the U.S. serves in the security of East Asia. A division of labor between Japan and the U.S. will be required in the future as well, but this should not be based upon a short-term view such as the division of the costs needed to maintain Japan-U.S. security arrangements, but rather a long-term view regarding the division of roles in the construction of the new world order as the 21st century approaches.

Third, regional cooperation is necessary in East Asia, but this will not be easy to achieve due to differing political systems, differences in the levels of economic and societal development, and historical backgrounds. Even so, taking the long-term view it will be important to begin a dialogue among the various countries of East Asia on the goals of peace and stability. Regional cooperation will start from dialogue and it

will be necessary to promote progress toward the encouragement of trust among the countries in the region, military reductions in the area, and the establishment of a regional security system.

It is difficult to predict how long the Hosokawa administration will last, standing as it does on the fragile base of a coalition government. But no matter what character the government that replaces the Hosokawa administration has there is no doubt that Japan's role in international society will receive even more attention than it does now. As Prime Minister Hosokawa said, Japan needs to be fully aware of "Japan's position and duties as an international state" as it constructs its security policies. ■

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